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(Continued.)

"Of course, Mr. Sommers," she began sarcastically, "if the navy men are so selfish that they're not willing to she's made of, if they're afraid to take any sort of plunge except a plunge for glory, why, they must expect to receive the reward that comes to the men who won't try-the reward of failure. If I were a man"-her voice took on color of strength and boldness -"whether I were in the navy or whether I owned a continent, I would not let any foolish selfishness of my own keep me from attempting to get anything I wanted."

"Frances!" The man whirled suddenly, catching her two hands. "You mean it?"

She looked up at him, happy and quite unafraid. "Yes," she said, "of course I mean

it." And her eyes invited him. Impulsively the man leaned toward her. Then, as their faces almost seemed to touch, a cold, hard voice seemed to cut them apart.

"Ah! Good evening! I thought it was you two up here."
Angry, embarrassed, the navy lieutenant stepped back. The girl, with a

woman's power of self control, seemed quite unmoved. "Oh!" she cried gayly. "Is that you,

Edward? Lieutenant Sommers and I were just talking of you. He says you're a lucky dog. The marriage of Frances Durant and

Edward Pinckney had been so long anticipated by all who knew them that the announcement of their engagement would have been received with a feeling of general relief. In the minds of their friends it would have straightened out an awkward situation. Under present circumstances their friends did not know just how to take them. For more than a year it had been generally understood they would some time marry, but the members of the set in which they moved had waited anxiously, but in vain, for some definite sign. It was generally taken for granted that Mr. Durant did not object, and Mrs. Durant was openly in favor of the match.

Frances herself was the stumbling block. Time after time her intimates tried to find out, but each time, with perfect good humor, but with complete thoroughness, she blocked every attempt. Finally, their curiosity blocked, the solicitous friends had decided to take the situation for granted, and so they had with perfect faith spread the report that as soon as Frances had reached her majority the couple were to be married. Even the people about the steel works had come to look at the matter in the same light. The men understood that the general many ager was some day going to marry the daughter of the boss, and that made them treat him with more respect, for not only was he the manager, with power greater than most supervising managers had, but he was also expected to own the works some

Pinckney, too, was particularly careful not to contradict the general impression. He knew the influence it gave him, and also he was so tremendously ambitious and so anxious to bring the marriage about that he really believed it would be. And even an enemy must have admitted there was every reason for him to hope. The son of a friend, George Durant, who had committed suicide after ruining himself on Wall street, Edward Pinckney when a mere boy had been taken into the household of the steel millionaire. Durant had sent the boy to the best schools in the country. Boy though he was, Pinckney had appreclated the opportunity given him. He had studied hard, finally graduating from one of the best institutions at the top of his class. Then his benefactor had placed him immediately in the works. Durant had no son, and to him Edward Pinckney, with his inborn tact, his aggressiveness and his splendid mind, seemed just the kind of son he would have liked to have.

> CHAPTER II. THE SCHEMER.

HE big steel man was too busy with his great enterprises and his various future schemes to really study the boy. Had rudied him he was too shrewd not to have found out that Pinckney's aggressiveness was not backed by downright courage and that his faithfulness to his studies and his loyalty to his family were due wholly to selfish ambitions and not at all to gratitude or love to his benefactor. As for Mrs. Durant, it had not been hard for Pinckney to fool her; good looking, manly in appearance and with his ingratiating manners, he had completely and easily won the heart of the woman. Like many other busy men, Durant depended to a great extent upon his wife's opinions of young people so when she declared: "Edward is absolutely the finest boy I have ever known. He is just the sort of fellow that I should love to have Frances marry when she grows up," Durant taken the boy's character for granted. As for Frances, it would have been hard for her to tell just what she did think of Edward Pinck-

She was a baby when he first came to the house, so she could not remember the time when she had not known him. At first she had looked on him as sort of a big brother. Pinckney himself had been the one to undeceive her on this point. Even as a boy he had outlined his plan in life. His future was too obvious for him not to see the plain and easy way. He would enter the steel works, apply himself to business, earn the commendation and then the respect and confidence of his employer and so finally pave the way for marrying Frances and in-

heriting the business through her. To the scheming boy this seemed a simple plan, especially as he had so easily and quickly won Mrs. Durant give a girl a chance to show the stuff over to his side. Frances he did not look on as a serious obstacle, for he was shrewd enough to know that with his splendid start and opportunity for working on her sympathies he had everything in his favor. The big brother attitude he knew was fatal. She must not look on him in that light. He must be the confidant, the friend, the guide, but not the big brother in any sense. This attitude he had carefully established while she was yet a child. He was always ready to go to

> with the trustfulness of a young girl, she took everything he did at its face value. Her mother, too, worked perhaps unconsciously in Pinckney's favor. She made Frances believe that everything Edward did was right and spoke of the time when he should manage the Durant steel works as a matter of course. Frances from her father had inherited a strong mechanical bent. so there was that additional bond of sympathy between them.

any lengths to please her, and at first,

So matters had drifted along through her school days and Pinckney's college course until, when he came back from college to take up his life's work in the steel plant, the train was all laid and the odds were 100 to 1 in favor of his uniform and his reputation Lac the schemer coming off victorious, marrying the daughter of his benefactor and settling down as the right hand had been everywhere and seen pracman of the steel magnate and the ultimate owner of the great plant.

Frances was barely fourteen when he entered the works, and he at once began to make her confidant of his plans and aspirations for the good of her father's business. The eagerness and enthusiasm of the young man quite won the heart of the steel magnate.

"Edward is a wonder," he was ac customed to say. "Never saw such a hard worker. I thought I was a hustler, but that boy will sooner or later be showing me tricks."

How little the millionaire realized the truth of what he was saying so proudly! Such energy and enthusiasm as Pinckney displayed must have brought his advancement in any business, and when his benefactor wa also his chief and he lived in the house success was necessarily rapid. In three years he had worked up from a place in the draughting room to the post of manager. In each new position he made good, and Durant more than ever congratulated himself on his foresight in taking up the orphan son of

his friend. But Pinckney's love affair had not progressed so rapidly. Frances was glad of his success, but somehow she had ceased to be so interested in the man as she had been when a girl. By the time she was seventeen all the chinery and knew all about the works, glamour had worn off, Instead of tak- and he was up in that too. Then he ing him in a sentimental way she had drove, walked, played tennis, danced begun in her own mind to look on him as a sort of big brother. Pinckney did not know this. He felt that he was not coming ahead as fast as he had hoped, but he felt that there was time, especially as his hold on the rest of

the family increased daily. Durant himself now looked forward protege whom he had come to regard as a son should decide to marry. He he rubbed his hands with satisfaction at the thought that some day both Frances and the Durant works would be well taken care of after he was

Frances realized this and by the time she was nineteen had begun in a vague sort of way to accept the situation. Her friends teased her and then took the attachment for granted. She knew that she did not love Edward, but she did trust him, and she had met no one whom she could care

Edward had spoken to her mother and father, and both had agreed that whenever he chose to ask Frances he had their permission.

Then during the summer of Frances' nineteenth year her father went abroad, leaving the entire management of the big plant on Pinckney's hands. This had brought the man and the girl closer than ever together, and Pinckney was just debating how soon he should make his attempt when he received notice from the government that the Durant Steel works would have the task of casting a new cannon which a Lieutenant Sommers of the navy had invented and that Lieutenant Sommers had been detailed to stay at the steel plant until the work had been done. . There was another gun, the "Rhinestrom gun," in which Pinckney had more than a casual interest, but business demanded that the government work be accepted promptly.

One week after the notice from Washington Lieutenant Sommers appeared, and then Pinckney's troubles really began.

From the moment of their first meeting Frances Durant and Lieutenant Sommers had seemed mutually drawn to each other. To each the other was an entirely new type. Frances had never met a man just like the young naval lieutenant. Up to that time her experience had been with men like Pinckney, who thought apparently only of business and getting ahead, or with young men of the opposite extreme. who went in entirely for society and

dissipation of all kinds. Sommers accordingly came as a ne and very refreshing experience. He apparently had all the best qualities of the two kinds of men she had known before. He was young, good looking, brave, and that he had brains was proved by his invention of the Sommers gun, which the government had accepted provisionally and which was to be cast in the Durant steel works. Then, also, to the glamour of





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young naval officer brought the charm of a cultured man of the world. He tically all there was for a man to see, and, unlike many men of his profession, he could talk about it, and talk well. So it was no wonder that the



if father had not started you."

girl almost immediately felt herself drawn to him. They had so many interests in common. She knew maknew in Pittsburg. So it was no won der that from the time of Sommers arrival Pinckney found himself put aside.

For a week the manager of the steel works did not notice the fast growing friendship. He was very busy and to the time when his daughter and the had fittle time for outside interests. Then, also, he felt so confident that he did not pay as much attention to trusted Pinckney more than ever, and Frances and what she was doing as he might have had he imagined there was the slightest chance of serious rivalry. That idea at first did not enter his head. Compared to his own position, he considered the post of a lieutenant in the navy insignificant. It was not until a week had gone by and he discovered that Frances had been out with the officer for several hours each day that he finally awoke to the danview. Then his first move was foolish. He asked Frances to go to the theater with bim that night.

"I am awfully sorry, Edward," she told him; "but, you see, Mr. Sommers and I are going tonight to that play. But I am sure he would be glad to have you come along. I'll get one of the girls, and we will make up a party."

"No, thanks," the man retorted shortly ...'I don't care anything for the theater, you know. I only asked because I thought you might wish to

She smiled on him sweetly.

"I know how self sacrificing you are, Edward, about the theater; but, you see, you need not bother while Mr. Sommers is here. You have been awfully good to me about it, but now you can have a long rest, because, you see be is devoted to it, and he says he gets ashore so seldom that he likes to go at every opportunity. Isn't that nice for

"Of course that is all right, Frances," he agreed stiffly, "but any time you do wish to go it will be a great pleasure for me to take you. If I were you I would not go out too much with this naval whippersnapper. You know how people talk, and you don't want to get the gossips wagging their tongues about you and a penniless naval lieutenant. It's easy to start gossip in Pittsburg, you know."

The girl's head came up sharply, and her smile was dangerously bright as she replied:

"That is awfully sweet of you, Edward, to warn me about penniless naval officers, but don't you think that a man who can invent a new gun is quite as good as a man who can merey make one? And then, Edward, dear, even you might be practically penniless if father had not started you." And, smiling, she left him with his jaw set tight and every nerve muscle

quivering with anger. "Penniless." he muttered at last. "A man who invents guns as good as a man who merely makes them. I am a puddler or a mechanic, I suppose, in

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